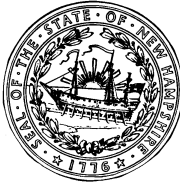


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TO: Carlos Martinez, Collette Roney and Mary Moran
Office of Standards, Assessment and Accountability
U.S. Department of Education

FROM: Heather Gage, Division of Educational Improvement Director
New Hampshire Department of Education

DATE: March 12, 2014

RE: New Hampshire Alternate Assessment

Thank you for talking with us on February 26th regarding New Hampshire's alternate assessment process moving forward. The objectives of the call included requesting feedback on:

- The state's desire to move away from our current *Alternate Learning Progressions (ALPs) Assessment* and join one of the assessment consortiums currently underway (Dynamic Learning Maps OR National Center and State Collaborative) for the 2014-15 school year; and
- The state's reporting and accountability requirements as we move into one of the federally-funded alternate assessment consortiums.

To review, in New Hampshire, every student takes the statewide assessment –as required by state and federal law – once a year by taking either the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) assessment or the NH ALPs assessment. The Smarter Balanced (which will replace NECAP) is being piloted this spring. The state is also interested in operationalizing a new alternate assessment and has been in conversations with both national, state-led consortiums about their process and assessment.

The challenge we have is that all of our schools are currently engaged in the NH ALPs right now. This assessment will be scored this summer as it always has been and in the past would have been blended for accountability purposes with the results of the next fall NECAP assessment. However, because the state is moving from a fall to a spring implementation, the next assessment (Smarter Balanced) will not be administered until the spring of 2015. This would be the same time students would be taking the next alternate assessment leaving this year's NH ALPs results "hanging" without a "traditional" assessment to attach to for accountability purposes (see Table 1 below).

We understand that the law requires an assessment to be administered to all students in identified grades each year AND that those results are reported. The state can still meet those requirements since this year's administration of the NH ALPs is currently underway. We will also still report the results in early fall as has

been our practice. However, we would like to request that the US ED consider the following multi-year transition waiver:

The NH Department of Education requests that the **results of the current (2014) NH ALPs assessment not be used to blend with the Smarter Balanced Assessment in the spring of 2015.** Results and participation rates of the current NH ALPs Assessment would be reported, as always, in early fall of 2014.

In addition, the NH Department of Education requests that the new alternate assessment (to be determined this spring) that will be administered in the spring of 2015 be considered a pilot and that the results and participation rates would be reported to schools, districts, parents and the general public; however **the results of the assessment would not be used for accountability purposes for one year** given the fact that it would be the first year teachers and students have experienced the new assessment. Full accountability requirements would continue to be fulfilled in the 2015-16 school year.

TABLE 1

Assessment	Assessment Given	Learning Year Assessed	Results released	Accountability Blend
NH ALPS	Spring 2014	2013-14	Fall 2014	<i>No NECAP in the fall of 2014. Reporting of results and participation rate only.</i>
Smarter Balanced	Spring 2015	2013-14 & 2014-15	Summer 2015 (expected)	<i>Alt. Assessment results and participation rates are reported. Results are not used for accountability purposes.</i>
New Alt. Assessment	Spring 2015	2014-15	Summer 2015 (expected)	
Smarter Balanced	Spring 2016	2015-16	Summer 2016 (expected)	<i>Fall 2016</i>
New Alt. Assessment	Spring 2016	2015-16	Summer 2016 (expected)	

We thank you in advance for considering this multi-year transition waiver. Please let me know if you have any questions. My direct line is 603-271-5992. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Cc: Virginia Barry, Commissioner, NH DOE
Paul Leather, Deputy Commissioner, NH DOE
Santina Thibedeau, State Director of Special Education, NH DOE
Scott Mantie, State Director for Assessment and Accountability, NH DOE